

Improving the health of the coast through #SciComm

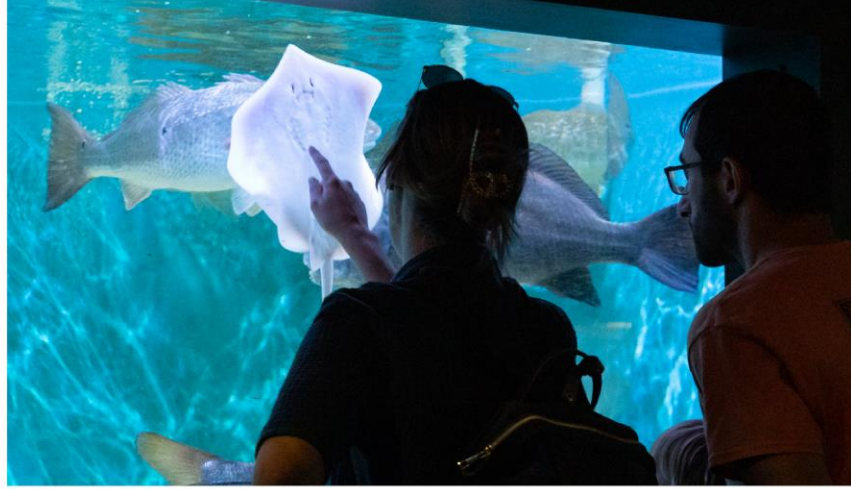
*Emily Kenworthy
Communications Director,
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Sea Grant*



Marine Extension and
Georgia Sea Grant
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA







MISSION

To improve the environmental, social and economic health of the Georgia coast through **research, education and extension.**



My Role

Increase our visibility locally, regionally and nationally by communicating our work in **creative** and **digestible** ways

Challenges:

- Small coast
- Most of the population = inland

We need to educate people about the importance of our coastal resources so they are inspired to appreciate and protect them.



Storytelling

News

Trawling for trash: Using recycled shrimp nets to remove marine debris

April 18, 2022 - by Emily Kenworthy



UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant has come up with a creative way to clean up the Georgia coast and provide financial support to local commercial shrimpers whose income was limited during the pandemic.

Through Trawl to Trash, funded by the [National Sea Grant College Program](#), commercial shrimpers are recruited to sew bags made of recycled shrimp net material that can be used to collect marine debris.

"It's exciting to find a new purpose for these trawl nets and who better to make the bags than the shrimpers who have spent countless hours mending their nets ahead of shrimping season?" said Dodie Sanders, marine educator at Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant, and lead on the Trawl to Trash project.

News

Phytoplankton monitors help keep communities safe from harmful algal blooms

April 21, 2021 - by Kadie Beth Duncan



Every Thursday, a group of dedicated UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant volunteers collect water samples from the Skidaway River. They process the samples in the lab at the UGA Aquarium, counting and identifying the phytoplankton in each sample as part of the National Phytoplankton Monitoring Network (PMN).

"I absolutely adore it," said Sandy Haeger, a PMN volunteer. "Thursdays are really special to me because I love getting to see the marine animals at the aquarium, collect data with the team and catch up with the staff."



Phytoplankton are critical organisms that serve as the base of the marine food web and they provide at least half the Earth's oxygen. In a balanced



Nature's Bad Weather Buffer

Bliss and John Pelli, an aquaculture extension agent based at UGA's Skidaway campus, drag bags upon bags of oyster shells from the boat onto the edge of the creek. Right now, the bagged shells look a bit out of place, but once the tide rolls in, the bags will be submerged by a couple of feet of water.

As the summer progresses, wild oysters will release their offspring in larval form. The baby oysters then find a place to settle, permanently attaching themselves to a hard surface. Frequently, they cling to older oyster shells, which creates the giant, tight clumps of oysters that characterize the Georgia coast.

The shells Bliss and Pelli are tossing into the shallow waters are part of a larger project between the university and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources to determine the best means of rebuilding these natural living shorelines.

The oysters are pretty good at rebuilding on their own. But the researchers are hoping to help give them a head start by providing the perfect place for larva to cement themselves.

As the baby oysters grow, they'll form large clumps that are difficult to pry apart with your bare hands.

Over time, the oysters build reefs that protect Georgia's salt marsh estuaries from adverse weather and tides, buffering wave energy and guarding against erosion. They also provide an enticing habitat for fish, clams, and crabs. Because of the variety of aquatic life, fishermen are drawn to the reefs as well.

The reefs also improve water quality. But over the years, the reefs



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Faces of Resiliency

Video series highlighting how communities are increasing their resilience to sea level rise, storm surge and flooding

- ✓ **Feature diverse perspectives**
- ✓ **Solution-driven**
- ✓ **Serve as a framework for other vulnerable communities facing similar challenges**



FACES OF RESILIENCY: Conserving Georgia's Salt Marshes

UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant • 360 views • 11 months ago



FACES OF RESILIENCY: Adapting with Green Infrastructure

UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant • 190 views • 11 months ago



FACES OF RESILIENCY: Restoring Dunes to Protect Coastal Communities

UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant • 298 views • 11 months ago



FACES OF RESILIENCY: Enhancing Equity in Flood Resilience

UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant • 163 views • 11 months ago



FACES OF RESILIENCY: Planning for Future Flooding and Sea Level Rise

UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant • 230 views • 11 months ago



FACES OF RESILIENCY: Improving Flood Literacy in Coastal Georgia

UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant • 122 views • 11 months ago



Restoring Dunes to Protect Coastal Communities

Diverse perspectives:

- City Planner
- Tybee Resident
- Biology Professor

Solution-driven

- Popular barrier island community has been hit by several hurricanes in recent years
- Community planners + researchers are working together to stabilize the dune system with support from residents



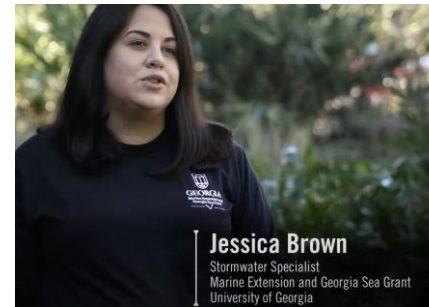
Adapting with Green Infrastructure

Diverse perspectives:

- Stormwater Specialist/Practitioner
- Community Stakeholder
- Research Engineer/Hydrologist

Solution-driven

- Low-lying community park is seeing significant flooding and runoff
- Implementation of large-scale green infrastructure practice improves water quality of surrounding waterways



What makes this approach successful?

- Topical relevance/significance
- Human element
- Digestible concepts
- Strong visuals
- Hope

These stories show how resilience projects can be successful by **involving communities in planning** and implementing **science-based solutions**.



Questions?

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